

# Infinity and beyond

"The principal idea behind an infinity edge pool should be to create a seamless visual flow by connecting with distant water."

*David Clarke, Map Architecture and Planning*

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## Seamless flow

A sloping site high above a palm-filled valley on an idyllic Thai island provided a perfect excuse for the architects to indulge in an infinity edge pool

When five friends got together to build this island resort for their friends and families, they wanted everything to have a rock-star quality – right down to the infinity edge pool. Luckily, the site they chose was well-suited to such a project.

director of Map Architecture and Planning, and one of the five owners, says the choice of an infinity edge pool was dictated by the site.

"These pools can be a cliché, but if ever there was a site that really warranted an

infinity edge pool, it was this one.

"The hillside drops away dramatically to a dense, palm-filled valley 45 metres below, and when you're sitting in the pool, there's a seamless flow between the distant sea and the edge of the pool."

The choice of pool also made sense logistically – a steep site meant swimmers couldn't access the pool from the downhill side anyway, and to build decking around the pool on every side would have been very expensive.

Underneath the infinity edge is a

Proceeding pages: The resort style home featured on these pages was designed as a holiday getaway for five friends and their families. The pavilion are nestled around the signature piece of the complex – an infinity edge pool.

Facing page: Lighting is used in the pool to give it a subtle glow at night without distracting from the lights from the village below.

Above: A jessazi at one end of the pool is roofed to provide shade. Due to the tropical climate, the jessazi is not heated.





narrow moat. The water cascades over the edge, and then is pumped back up to the top. The black tiles lining the pool are continued over the edge, right down to the moat below.

The tiles give a dark opalescence to the pool, and under direct sunlight they create a mother-of-pearl effect.<sup>1</sup>

In keeping with the luxury theme, a movie screen rolls down at night to allow the owners to lie back and watch movies while lounging in the pool.

The owners expected the pool to be the

**Left:** Bedroom areas were designed to take advantage of the expansive views.

**Top:** Drapes and bedspreads are made from Thai silk. Plantation timber, stained to a dark teak colour, is employed for ceilings.

**Above:** One of the main unifying themes of the complex is the use of Thai sandstone flooring. The material was installed in a range of finishes - polished indoors, honed in bathrooms, saw cut for terraces, and chiseled for feature walls.





main focus of activity during the day, so the living and dining pavilions were built to surround the pool. The sloping site meant the architects were able to create a grandstand effect with little environmental intervention.

"We were able to nestle the house into the hill with a minimal amount of cut and fill. We didn't want it to stand out as inappropriate," Clarke says.

They decided on a subtle Thai style of architecture, designed to appeal to both Thai people and foreign visitors – Thai

people think the style is western, and Westerners think it's Thai. Dividing the house into pavilions is a Thai concept, as is the style of the two-part pavilion roofs – a steeply sloping upper roof connecting to a low-pitched, curved roof.

One pavilion accommodates the kitchen and communal living areas, one houses the bedroom suites, and the third a carport, staff quarters, and the guest suite. The bedroom and living areas were built to take advantage of the views out over the pool to the sea.

The kitchen was designed as an open-plan entertaining area, with the brays-duty, Thai-style kitchen housed in the staff area.

"Typically, Thai kitchens are hidden away. Our kitchen is used pretty much just for breakfast and as a drinks dispensing area," Clarke says.

Overall, he says the house fits the design brief perfectly.

"The five of us wanted a house in paradise, to get away from the stress of our daily jobs in Hong Kong and China."

**Architect:** Kitchen designer/landscape designer/interior designer David Clarke, HBA, SAA, AA, RIBA, MAp Architecture and Planning Hong Kong  
**Builder:** Kitchen manufacturer/joiner designer Clayton Jones, SWP Construction  
**Window and door joinery:** Hasting Joinery Goldenwood, Bangkok  
**Window and door hardware:** Saphan Hardware  
**Cladding:** Mr. Makar Timber Cladding Goldenwood, Bangkok  
**Slab:** Corred terrazzo, APK, Bangkok  
**Flooring:** Polished sandstone from Kasai  
**Paints:** Dulux  
**Heating:** Under



**Minor Audio:** JBL  
**Kitchen benchtops and splashback:** African Black granite  
**Sink, oven, cooktop, microwave:** Smeg  
**Refrigerator:** LG  
**Courtyard and paving:** The sandstone  
**Walls/roof landscaping:** Pavanat Stone walling by SWP Construction  
**Pool tiles:** Silver and black tiles by APK, Bangkok  
**Sculptures:** From Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand

Photography by Tim Nolan

Above left: Guests share one communal kitchen, though the bulk of the cooking is done in the staff quarters. Lounge furniture is made from local wood and water hyacinth.

Top: Furnishings and object of art are all Thai in origin, and were principally sourced in Chiang Mai.

Above: Connection to the outdoors was important to the design of this home. The kitchen area opens up to a covered terrace overlooking the pool and the village below.